

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

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DISTO

FOLLOWING REPEAT NEW DELHI 6603 ACTION SECSTATE LONDON

18 MAY

QUOE

UNCLAS NEW DELHI 6603

LONDON FOR AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TECH, IN

SUBJECT: INDIAN NUCLEAR EXPLOSION

1. DESPITE INFORMATION GIVEN TO US TO CONTRARY BY PRESS
INFORMATION BUREAU, PRESS TICKERS REPORT THAT H.R. SETHAN,
CHAIRMAN OF THE INDIAN ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION HELD "IMPROMPTU"
PRESS CONFERENCE ON EVENING OF MAY 18.

2. ACCORDING TO TICKERS SETHNA SAID THAT THE EXPLOSION WAS
PURELY A SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENT.

HE SAID THE EXPERIMENT WAS CARRIED OUT AT A DEPTH OF
APPROXIMATELY ONE HUNDRED METERS AT 0805 AM MAY 18.
AFTER THE DEVICE WAS SET OFF, AN AERIAL

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SURVEY WAS UNDERTAKEN WITHIN HALF AN HOUR AT A HEIGHT

OF THIRTY METERS AND THERE WAS NO SIGNIFICANT RADIO ACTIVITY ABOVE THE NORMAL. SETHAN SAID THAT A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF SAND HAD COME UP ALONG WITH THE EARTH AND THE WIND WAS BLOWING SOUTHWEST. BY ABOUT 9:30 OR TEN AM, TEAMS REACHED A DISTANCE OF ABOUT TWO HUNDRED METERS FROM THE ACTUAL SITE AND ONE COULD SAY THERE WAS NIL VENTING, ACCORDING TO THE WIRE SERVICE STORIES.

3. HE ANNOUNCED THE MAGNITUDE OF THE EXPLOSION WAS BETWEEN TEN AND FIFTEEN KILOTONS. THE ANALYSIS HURRIEDLY MADE THIS MORNING WAS ONLY PRELIMINARY IT WOULD TAKE SOME TIME BEFORE SOME DEFINITE CONCLUSIONS COULD BE DRAWN. TURNING TO FOREIGN NEWSMEN HE SAID THAT SEISMIC DEVICES AROUND THE WORLD SHOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DETECT IT.

4. IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS, SETHAN SAID THE EXPERIMENT WAS SUCCESSFUL. IT WAS CARRIED OUT TO FIND OUT (1) THE CRATERING EFFECT AND (2) TO SEE HOW FAR IT HELPED CRUSH THE ROCK IN THE SUB STRUCTURE OF THE EARTH. SETHNA CLAIMED THAT THERE WAS NO RADIO ACTIVITY, THE STORIES SAID.

5. SETHNA MAINTAINED THAT ALTHOUGH THE EXPLOSION HAD THROWN SOME ROCKS AND SAND OVER THE SURFACE, THESE WERE CHASED BY A HELICOPTER FOR TEN TO FIFTEEN KILOMETERS, BUT NO SIGNIFICANT RADIOACTIVITY ABOVE THE NORMAL BACKGROUND WAS DETECTED. IT WAS A TOTALLY CONTAINED EXPLOSION.

6. IN REGARD TO THE EQUIPMENT TO STUDY THE EFFECTS, HE SAID, THREE MICRO BAROGRAPHS WERE LOCATED AT DISTANCES FOR FOUR HUNDRED METERS, THREE HUNDRED METERS AND ONE NEAR THE SITE. SOME SEISMIC INSTRUMENTS WERE ALSO LOCATED AROUND THE SITE. THE TEAMS COULD NOT GET CLOSER THAN HUNDRED METERS OF THE SITE BECAUSE OF FISSURES CAUSED BY THE EXPLOSION.

7. DETAILS OF THE EVENT WERE GIVEN TO INDIAN AND FOREIGN NEWSMEN IN THE EVENING BY SETHAN AND DR. R. RAMANNA, DIRECTOR UNCLASSIFIED

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OF THE BHABHA ATOMIC RESEARCH CENTER, BOTH OF WHOM "HAD RUSHED FROM THE EXPERIMENTAL AREA BY PLANE," ACCORDING TO WIRE SERVICE ACCOUNTS. SCHNEIDER UNQUOTE RUSH

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